DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 256 507 PS 015 121

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TITLE Perception of Socialization Roles: A Study of Israeli Mothers in Town and Kibbutz.
SPONS AGENCY Foundation for Child Development, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, April 25-28, 1985). Research was also supported by a grant from the Haas Fund, Stanford University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Caregivers; Child Rearing; Comparative Analysis; Day Care; Family Life; Foreign Countries; *Mothers; Nursery Schools; Parent Child Relationship; *Role Perception; *Rural Urban Differences; *Socialization
IDENTIFIERS *Ideology; *Israel; Kibbutzim

ABSTRACT

Variations in mothers' role perceptions were studied as a function of (1) the amount of time mothers spend with their children and (2) the cultural ideology of childrearing that assigns to the mother either sole or shared responsibility for socialization. Four groups of Israeli mothers of toddlers were studied. Among nuclear family mothers 21 had children in nursery school, and 22 had children in fulltime daycare. Among kibbutz mothers 23 lived on familial kibbutzim where children slept at home, and 22 lived on communal kibbutzim where children slept apart from their parents. Questionnaires assessed the mothers' perceptions of mother and caregiver influence and their use of disciplinary and nurturant techniques. Whereas the amount of time did not contribute to variations in role perceptions, childrearing ideology (sole versus shared socialization responsibility) showed strong effects. In accord with nuclear family ideology, daycare mothers perceived mothers as more influential and as using more of all socializing techinques than caregivers. In accord with their ideology of shared responsibilities, kibbutz mothers perceived caregivers to be as influential as mothers. Further, as specified by kibbutz ideology, kibbutz mothers reported that they used nurturance more and disciplinary techniques less than caregivers. The importance of cultural ideology on parents' role perceptions is discussed. (Author/RH)

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ED256507

Perception of socialization roles:
A study of Israeli mothers in town and kibbutz.

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Running Head: ROLE PERCEPTIONS

This research was supported by grants from the Foundation for Child Development and by the Haas Fund at Stanford University. We are indebted to Michael Nathan and Aliza Schnabel-Brandes from the Center for Research in Kibbutz Education for facilitating this study. Special thanks go to Lela Sarnat for help in developing the questionnaire, to Nili Brosch, Nurit Kipnis, Sarita Ringel and Tamar Schachnai for collecting and coding the data, to Barbara G. Ascenbrenner for data analyses, and to Randy Mont-Reynaud for stimulating discussions. Reprint requests should be sent to S. Shirley Feldman, Youth Studies Center , Building 460, Stanford Uniiversity, Stanford, CA 94305.

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Abstract

Variations in mothers' role perceptions were studied as a function of (a) the amount of time mothers spend with their children, and b) the cultural ideology of childrearing that assigns to the mother either sole or shared responsibility for socialization. 4 groups of Israeli mothers of toddlers were studied. Among nuclear family mothers 21 had children in nurseryschool, and 22 had children in fulltime daycare. Among kibbutz mothers 23 lived on Familial kibbutzim where children slept at home, and 22 lived on Communal kibbutzim where children slept apart from their parents. Questionnaires assessed mothers' perceptions of mother and caregiver influence and their use of disciplinary and nurturant techniques. Whereas amount of time did not contribute to variations in role perceptions, childrearing ideology (sole vs shared socialization responsibility) showed strong effects. In accord with nuclear family ideology, daycare mothers perceived mothers as more influential and as using more of all socializing techniques than caregivers. In accord with their ideology of shared responsibilities, kibbutz mothers perceived caregivers to be as influential as mothers. Further, as specified by kibbutz ideology, kibbutz mothers reported that they used nurturance more and disciplinary techniques less than caregivers. The importance of cultural ideology on parents' role perceptions is discussed.

Research in parents' ideas, attitudes and values has had a checkered history in developmental psychology. Once the focus of intensive investigation (Brim, 1959; Emmerich, 1969; Hess & Handel, 1959; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1962; Schaefer & Bell, 1957) the area was abandonned because few correlates were found between parental reports and their behavior (Parke, 1978). Recently, however, that abandonnment has been described as premature, and the argument offered that parents' ideas and parents' behavior are separate sources of information, both worthy of study and with data yet to be gathered about the nature of their relationship (Parke, 1978). The change in position has also been fostered by the emergence of work in social cognition which recognizes that, like other ideas, those about parenting and development are interesting phenomena in their own right. Research has now been directed towards determining the content and quality of parents' ideas and towards locating both the sources and the consequences of them (see Goodnow (1985) and Siegel (1985) for recent reviews).

The present study focuses on role perceptions of mothers from Israeli town and kibbutz. Two aspects are studied; the extent of influence and the use of various childrearing techniques that mothers attribute to themselves and to caregivers. The perception of influence is important because it is likely to have effects on parents' actions . It is unlikely, for instance that effort will be expended on a task where one's influence is perceived as limited. Further, influence is thought to diminish as others become involved in socialization (Newson and Newson, 1976), making perceived influence particularly interesting to study in contexts of shared childrearing. Perceptions of childrearing techniques

are also interesting for they inform us how parents attempt to socialize their children. Two broad categories of techniques are considered: nurturant techniques which depend on empathic, supportive or playful interaction, and disciplinary techniques which depend on control, instruction and limit setting. These correspond to the well-established parenting dimensions of warmth and control (Becker, 1964,) and also to the ideologically guided division of childrearing assigned to mothers and caregivers on kibbutz.

There is an accumulating body of work on conditions that contribute to variations in parents' ideas (Goodnow, 1985). In some of this work the emphasis falls on the extent to which ideas about children and parenting vary as a function of differences in the parents' degree and type of experience with children. In such studies the major emphasis is often on the construction of roles in the light of individual responsibilities or observations of daily experience. Factors such as sex of parent, age of child (Knight, 1983; McGillicudi-deLisi, 1982; Russell & Russell, 1982), or parents' difficulties in childrearing (Sameroff & Feil, 1985) have been investigated. Many other variables remain to be studied. In light of the growing incidence of working mothers who are away from their children for extended parts of the day, the impact of the amount of time spent with the child on the mother's role perception merits attention.

Variation in ideas about parenting and children have also been studied among diverse national or socio-economic groups (Frankel & Roer-Bornstein, 1982; Goodnow, Cashmore, Cotton, & Knight, 1983; Hess, Kashigawa, Azuma, Price & Dickinson, 1980, Luster & Kain, 1984, Ninio,

1979). However, differences between social or cultural groups do not pinpoint which of the many varying practices and beliefs accounts for the results. Frequently the primary source of parents' ideas in such studies is attributed to an implicit childrearing ideology in the social structure or to opportunities for acquiring ideas from other members of the same cultural group. But the absence of an explicit, independently assessed ideology of parenting and child development among the different social or cultural groups makes such interpretations problematical.

In the research to be described in this paper we investigate the contribution of two variables on mothers' ideas of parenting: the amount of time mothers engage in childcare, and the ideology of childrearing which assigns to the mother either sole or shared responsibility for the socialization of her children. Israel is an ideal setting for exploring these variables for there are two dominant forms of childrearing: - the nuclear family in which the mother has primary responsibility for childrearing, and the collective childrearing of kibbutz (plural kibbutzim) in which the ideology assigns joint responsibility to professional caregivers and parents for children's socialization. Within these childrearing settings there are variations in the amount of time parents spend with their children.

On kibbutz, children from birth are raised amongst a group of age-mates in a special children's house set apart from the residences of adults. While primary childcare is in the hands of a professional caregiver, contact is maintained with parents by means of lengthy (2-3 hour) daily visits. Originally all the kibbutzim had communal sleeping

arrangements in which children slept apart from their parents, but in recent years there has been a growing trend towards family sleeping arrangements (Gerson, 1978; Talmon, 1972; Tiger and Shepher, 1975). Despite differences in sleeping arrangements all kibbutzim have maintained communal childrearing arrangements in which infants and children are cared for by professional caregivers for approximately eight hours per day. The caregiver's role during this time is not merely to mind the children, but to facilitate their development in the broadest possible sense, and to transmit the values of the kibbutz. Furthermore, both types of kibbutzim continue to share a common division of labor between parents and caregivers with the caregivers' role to teach, socialize and where necessary to discipline , whereas the parents' role is to love, nurture and be supportive of the child. In daily interaction parents and caregivers both provide some degree of affection and socialization pressure, but they differ in the balance of these activities.

In contrast to the situation on kibbutz, the town mother has primary responsibility for rearing her child. Unlike the kibbutz mother who must defer to the caregiver on issues pertaining to socialization, the town mother routinely makes her own decisions regarding childrearing. In turn, she feels responsible for the child's successes and failures in accomplishing the various socialization goals. Despite her frequent use of auxillary caregivers, the town mother, by virtue of her freedom to choose one playgroup, daycare setting or childcare worker over another, stills maintains major responsibility for her child's socialization.

In our reseach we study four groups of Israeli mothers whose children are either (1) in nursery school, (2) in full-time daycare , (3) in

full-time kibbutz care yet sleep at home , or (4) in full-time kibbutz care and sleep in the children's house. These groups vary in two major ways. First, they vary in the amount of time children spend in the mothers' care: Among the town mothers, nursery school children spend more time with their mothers than do daycare children. A similar variation exists among kibbutz children: Children from kibbutzim with familial sleeping arrangements spend more time with their mothers than do children from kibbutzim with communal sleeping arrangements. Second, the groups differ in childrearing ideology, in particular whether childrearing (the facilitation of longterm socialization goals) is primarily the responsibility of the mother or is shared between the mother and another responsible adult. Particularly instructive in this regard is the comparison between mothers with children in town daycare centers and mothers from kibbutzim with familial sleeping arrangements. Both groups spend similar amounts of time with their children but differ in the ideological assumption of childrearing responsibility.

In summary, this research investigates how mothers' view their roles relative to that of caregivers as a function of (a) the amount of time children spend in the care of others , and (b) whether childrearing ideology assigns to the mother sole or joint responsibility for the socialization of children. Two aspects of the parental role perceptions are studied - breadth of influence and the types of socializing techniques (disciplinary vs nurturant) that are used.

Method

Subjects

A total of 88 Israeli mothers of toddlers aged 2.5 years filled out Role Perception questionnaires. Forty-four subjects lived in Haifa; 21 with children in nursery school for 24 hours per week, and 22 with children in daycare centers for 44 or more hours per week. Forty-five respondents were kibbutz members who had lived on kibbutz for at least the preceding 8 years. Approximately half of the kibbutz mothers came from kibbutzim with communal sleeping arrangements (hereafter called Communal kibbutzim) where children slept in special quarters apart from their parents, and half came from kibbutzim with familial sleeping arragements (hereafter called Familial kibbutzim) where children slept in their parent's apartment. Acceptance rates for participation in the research was 61 percent for nursery school mothers, 55 percent for mothers of children in daycare centers, and 88 percent for kibbutz mothers.

The four groups of subjects were compared on a variety of background factors. Whereas there were no differences between the two kibbutz samples nor between the two town samples, the kibbutz samples differed from town families in several ways; they had larger families (2.8 vs 2.0 children), and fewer kibbutz than town mothers had tertiary education. These findings reflect demographic differences between town and kibbutz women.

The Instrument

The Role Perception Questionnaire assessed the respondent's

perception of the roles of mother, father, and caregiver. There were two main parts to the questionnaire: domains of influence and socializing techniques.

To assess domains of influence 28 behavioral areas that are common targets of socialization pressure for toddlers were listed. Respondents ranked mother, father and caregiver relative to each other in terms of amount of influence in each of the areas. Only data for mothers' perceptions about the mother and caregivers roles are reported in this paper.

An overall influence score (α=.89) was calculated for mothers and caregivers that consisted of the sum of ratings for each of the 28 items. Items were scored so that the higher the rating the greater the influence. In addition, three subscale scores were calculated based on an a priori conceptual sort followed by confirmatory factor analyses of each subscale. Only items with factor loadings of .25 or greater were subsequently given a unit weight to form the subscale scores. Item to total (minus the item) correlations and alpha coefficients of generalizability were calculated. The domains of influence subscales are as follows: Age-normed behavior (α=.79) included eight items such as giving up the bottle, dressing self, going to bed easily, using the potty, putting toys away etc. Self-regulation (α=.81) included eight items such as controlling aggression, taking turns, waiting patiently, obeying, following rules etc. Inter-personal skills (α=.73) included five items such as being helpful, friendly/sociable, sharing toys and possessions, being sensitive to the needs of others, and joining in activities with other children. An additional seven items did not enter into any subscale

score, although they are included in the overall influence score. These items included showing respect for adults, being independent, standing up for oneself, having good manners, telling the truth, showing good concentration and playing alone.

The second portion of the Role Perception Questionnaire listed 16 commonly used socialization techniques. Each respondent listed whether mother, father, or caregiver used this technique most often in interacting with the toddler. An a priori conceptual sort yielded three subscales, each of which was subject to a confirmatory factor analyses). Only items with factor loadings greater than .3 were subsequently given unit weights to form a subscale score. Item to total (minus the item) correlations and alpha coefficients of generalizability were calculated. These analyses revealed that one of the a prior conceptual subscales lacked cohesion and was therefore deleted. The resulting subscales were as follows: nurturant techniques (α=. 70) included 5 items such as comforts/soothes, shows open affection, plays, listens to child, and helps child; disciplinary techniques (α=.71) included 7 items such as tells what to do/not to do, distracts from mischief, shows turn taking, punishes/reprimands, arranges environment, insists on routines, and prevents danger. Four items (rewards/praises, explains others' viewpoint, reasons, labels feelings) did not contribute to the subscale scores. Scores between disciplinary and nurturant techniques were uncorrelated.

Results

The various role perception scores for mothers were analyzed by 4x2

Anovas (group x sex of child), followed where appropriate, by planned contrasts: a) mothers of nursery schoolers vs mothers of children in daycare, b) daycare mothers vs mothers from kibbutzim with familial sleeping arrangements, and c) familial vs communal kibbutz mothers.

Similar analyses were undertaken on mothers' perceptions of caregiver roles, except that 3x2 Anovas (group x sex of child) were used. Since the Hebrew word for caregiver differs from the word for babysitter or nursery school teacher, many mothers of nursery schoolers did not rate caregiver's influence. As a result the contrast,"mothers of nursery schoolers vs mothers of daycare children" was omitted.

To assess the respondent's perception of the relative influence of mothers vs caregivers matched t tests were carried out separately by group. The results of the various analyses appear in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 here

Perceived Influence

Although mothers' perceived influence varied strongly by group ($F_{3,82}$ =10.24, $p<.001$), only one of the planned contrasts was significant: Daycare mothers felt more influential than Familial kibbutz mothers ($t = 2.7$, 43 df $p<.01$). To locate in which behavioral domain they felt more influential we carried out t tests on the three subscores. In only one domain did the groups differ: daycare mothers felt they influenced their children's age-normed

behavior significantly more than did Familial kibbutz mothers (t = 2.9, 43 df, p<.01). No differences were found between daycare mothers and Familial kibbutz mothers in their perceived influence in the domains of interpersonal behavior and self regulation.

Mothers' perceptions of the influence of the caregiver also varied by group ($F_{2,60}$ = 3.44, p<.05). None of the planned contrasts, however, was significant, suggesting that the scores of Familial kibbutz mothers lay midway between those of nursery school and communal kibbutz mothers. In this way, Familial kibbutz mothers perceived the caregivers' influence similarly to both daycare and Communal kibbutz mothers.

Within-group analyses of the relative influence that mothers attribute to themselves vs the caregivers showed different results for daycare and kibbutz mothers. Daycare mothers perceived that they were more influential than caregivers in overall influence (t=2.3, 20 df, p<.05). However, in each domain their influence was only marginally greater than the caregivers. In contrast, kibbutz mothers from Familial and Communal kibbutzim perceived that mothers and caregivers were equally influential. Examination of the domains of influence scores reveals that there was a division of influence between mothers and caregivers; the caregiver's influence was perceived to surpass that of the mother in the domain of age-normed behaviors (t=-3.8, 21 df, p<.001 on Familial kibbutzim), whereas the kibbutz mother's influence was perceived to surpass that of the caregiver in the domain of interpersonal behavior (t>2.3, 20-23 df, p<.05 on Familial and Communal kibbutzim).

Type of Socializing Technique

Given kibbutz idealogy which assigns different socialization techniques to mothers and caregivers, analyses were carried out on the perceived use of

disciplinary and nurturant techniques. Strong group differences emerged between mothers in their perceived use of disciplinary techniques ($F_{3,82}$ = 11.89, $p<.001$). Planned contrasts revealed that daycare mothers reported significantly greater reliance on these techniques than Familial kibbutz mothers reported (t = 2.6, 43 df, $p<.01$). Similarly, daycare and Familial kibbutz mothers differed significantly in their perceptions of the caregivers use of disciplinary techniques ($F_{2,60}$ =6.02, $p<.01$). Familial kibbutz mothers reported more frequently than daycare mothers that caregivers used these methods (t=-2.8, 43 df, $p<.001$).

The analyses of relative influence of mother vs caregiver revealed that whereas daycare mothers believed they used disciplinary techniques more than caregivers (t=2.2, 20 df, $p<.05$), both groups of kibbutz mothers felt that caregivers used these techniques more than they themselves did (t=-2.0, 23 df, $p<.06$ for Familial kibbutz mothers, and t=-4.3, 20 df, $p<.001$ for Communal kibbutz mothers).

In contrast to the data on disciplinary techniques, the mothers'perceptions of their use of nurturant techniques did not vary by group. Town and kibbutz mothers reported using such methods equally often. Similarly, no group differences were found in mothers' reports of caregivers' use of nurturant techniques. Within-group analyses of the relative use of nurturant techniques by mothers and caregivers however, showed strong and consistent results: mothers in all three groups reported that they used nurturant techniques very much more than did caregivers (t > 6.3, 20 df, $p<.001$).

Discussion

It is clear from the data that the amount of time mothers spend with their children does not affect their perception of influence nor the socialization techniques they report using. Mothers of nursery school children who are away from home only a few hours each day and mothers of children who are in fulltime daycare shared similar role perceptions. Similarly, Familial kibbutz mothers who have more opportunity to interact with their children than Communal kibbutz mothers (whose opportunities are limited by children sleeping apart from them) also had similar perceptions of their influence.

Mothers themselves frequently equate time with child with opportunities for influencing their offspring. In fact on kibbutz the movement to familism arose because mothers believed that the additional contact with their children resulting from familial sleeping arrangements would give them greater influence (Gerson, 1978; Spiro, 1980; Tiger & Shepher, 1975). Similarly, town mothers often justify staying out of the workforce by claiming that time away from the child diminishes their influence. In addition, in at least one study when children entered school and were away from the mother for significant portions of the day, mothers felt their influence decreased (Newson & Newson, 1976).

Why then, in this research did time with child have so little effect on the mothers role perceptions? It may be that time with child influences role perceptions when the amount of contact between the child and different childrearing agents is very discrepant (for example, 2 hours/week of grandparent contact vs 60 hours/week of parental contact), but that relatively small differences in hours together may not have any appreciable effect. In this research for example, mothers from Familial kibbutzim spent

more time with their children than did Communal kibbutz mothers, but the daily difference was of the order of an extra hour or so of the child's awake time. Even the difference in contact between mothers of children in nursery school and those whose children are in daycare is less than it first appears; nursery school children take lengthy afternoon naps upon returning home and thus have approximately two extra hours of awake time in the presence of their mothers. Additionally , the extra contact - occurs only on regular workdays, and not on weekends, public holidays and vacation time, when parents spend the full day with their families.

Other findings are also consistent with the conclusion that time with child does not influence mother's role perception. For example, kibbutz mothers did not perceive their influence as less than that of the caregiver, despite the caregiver's greater contact with the child during his waking hours. Mothers may assess their influence on children less by the daily variations in amount of contact, than by the cumulative time together over the life of the child, an assessment which takes into account the length and continuity of relationships. Thus, although the kibbutz mother's daily contact with the child is for relatively few hours, it extends throughout the child's life. In contrast, the caregiver sees the child for longer periods each day, but both planned and unplanned turnover of personnel in the children's house diminshes the impact of any one caregiver. Furthermore, kibbutz mothers, being personally invested in parenthood (Tiger & Shepher, 1975; Spiro, 1980) may base their reports of influence on biological and affective bonds, which in their minds overrides variation in time spent with child.

Our research gives support to Bronfenbrenner's view (1979) that larger cultural and societal factors contribute to the understanding of families. Our

data shows that childrearing ideology has an effect on mothers' role perceptions: mothers with sole responsibility for socialization felt more influential in their children's lives and attributed greater overall influence to mothers than to caregivers than did mothers who according to both ideology and practice shared childrearing responsibility with a caregiver. In contrast, kibbutz mothers perceived the influence of mothers and caregivers to be equal, albeit manifest in different domains.

Just as the ideologically derived sole vs shared responsibility for socialization had an impact on mothers' perception of influence over their children, so it also had an impact on the perceived use of disciplinary techniques. Daycare mothers reported using disciplinary techniques more often than did familial kibbutz mothers and more often than caregivers. Kibbutz mothers however, reported using disciplinary techniques less often than the caregiver. In contrast, the use of nurturant techniques did not vary as a function of whether socialization responsibility was shared or not. Mothers from town and kibbutz reported using these techniques equally often and very much more than caregivers. In fact, the perception of differential use of socialization techniques was in accord with the kibbutz ideology on the division of childrearing, with the caregiver as the socializer/educator and the mother as provider of affection and nurturance.

It is interesting to note that mothers in this research believed that nurturance contributed more to socialization success than did other techniques. When asked to list the five most important things they do which help their child grow up the way they want, all the mothers (from town and kibbutz) listed three or more nurturant techniques, when there were only five such items in a list of 16 techniques. Similarly, psychologists, psychiatrists

and educators emphasize the contributions that loving, accepting interactions make to children's security, basic trust and self esteem (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall,1978; Bowlby,1969; Erikson,1950; Rosenberg, 1965). Thus precisely the techniques prescribed by kibbutz ideology and reportedly used by kibbutz mothers are identified by experts as important for optimal child development. Thus it is not surprising that kibbutz mothers believe that their influence on their children is substantial.

There was some correspondence between the socialization techniques purportedly used by mothers and caregivers and the areas in which greatest influence was manifest. For example, kibbutz mothers who described themselves as using predominantly nurturant techniques thought they were more influential than caregivers in promoting interpersonal skills in their children. Behavior in this domain is more amenable to nurturant and nondisciplinary techniques than to stricture (Hartup, 1983). Caregivers who frequently used disciplinary techniques were perceived to be more influential than mothers in teaching children age-normed behavior (such as to give up the pacifier, to dress themselves and so forth). In this domain the setting and consistent enforcement of standards are thought to be important.

To what extent can the findings from childrearing on kibbutz be generalized to other shared childcare arrangements? There are a number of features of kibbutz living that suggests that generalization should be undertaken with caution. First of all, the shared childrearing arrangements on kibbutz involves ideological commitments and community wide agreements. It is not an individually negotiated arrangement subject to reconsideration. Second, on kibbutz competent job performance is extolled, even in low status service positions such as caregiver. In the small closed community of kibbutz

each person's job competence is public knowledge . Third, caregivers know they will have long-term contact with both parents and children, not just in the children's house, but in many social contexts and extending over many years. These factors may give the mothers confidence that the caregivers are accountable for their influence over the children and thereby make it easier to acknowledge them as contributing to the development of their children.

It is not known how accurate the perceptions of the mothers are in terms of the role they play in their children's lives. The mothers' perceptions may be self serving, designed to enhance their self esteem and to flatter the self (Miller & Ross, 1975) . In the area of parenting outcomes are not known for 20 or more years. Thus our data speak only to the effect that these women believe they have or wish to have on their children.

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Table 1. Mean Role Perception Scores for Mothers and Caregivers, and Within-Group and Between-Group Comparisons

Childcare Arrangement		Overall Influence			Disciplinary Techniques			Nurturant Techniques		
		Mother	Caregiver	t[a]	Mother	Caregiver	t[a]	Mother	Caregiver	t[a]
Nursery School	$\bar{X}$	2.65	na	na	.69	na	na	.79	na	na
Mothers	SD	.26			.21			.19		
Daycare Mothers	$\bar{X}$	2.49	2.02	2.3*	.57	.34	2.2*	.86	.09	14.8***
	SD	.34	.45		.27	.25		.20	.07	
Familial Kibbutz	$\bar{X}$	2.26	2.15	ns	.39	.55	-.20*	.77	.24	6.3***
Mothers	SD	.26	.35		.29	.30		.24	.33	
Communal Kibbutz	$\bar{X}$	2.24	2.31	ns	.29	.63	-.43***	.83	.21	7.9***
Mothers	SD	.28	.23		.22	.21		.21	.27	
F Group	F	10.24***	3.44*		11.89***	6.02***		ns	ns	
	df	3,82	2,60		3,82	2,60				
Contrast: Daycare vs	t	2.7**	ns		2.6**	-2.8**		na	na	
Familial Kibbutz	df	45			45	45				
Mothers										

[a]t Tests of difference between perception of mother vs caregiver roles

na Not applicable

ns Not significant, *p .05, **p .01, ***p .001